

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4803

May 17, 2017

Secretary Ben Carson
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20410

Acting Administrator Robert J. Fenton, Jr.
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20472

RE: June 2016 West Virginia Flooding (4273-DR-WV)

Dear Secretary Carson and Acting Administrator Fenton:

I appreciate the assistance and support that HUD and FEMA provided in the aftermath of the June 2016 floods in West Virginia. On June 23, 2016, a series of thunderstorms concentrated in West Virginia resulted in historic rainfall. Some counties experienced ten inches of rain within twenty-four hours. This event culminated in a thousand-year flood, causing widespread damage to homes, businesses, and infrastructure in the state. The flooding, which resulted in the loss of twenty-three lives, proved to be one of the deadliest natural disasters in the nation last year.

Former Governor Earl Ray Tomblin issued a letter detailing a state request for federal funding through the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Relief Program (CDBG-DR), recognizing the unique challenges that West Virginia faced in rebuilding. Mountainous topography, depressed income levels, and the lack of flood insurance for close to ninety percent of the affected residents and businesses are major obstacles to the recovery effort.

The House and Senate Appropriations Committees added significant funding for HUD's CDBG-DR program to assist with recovery efforts for West Virginia and other states that recently experienced major natural disasters. Throughout the fiscal year 2017 process, Congress has provided in aggregate over \$2.7 billion for CDBG-DR.¹ These funds are to support recovery and rebuilding efforts for damages incurred by severe weather events in 2015, 2016, and 2017.

To date, West Virginia has received over \$104 million in CDBG-DR funding for flood recovery efforts. This federal support has been absolutely critical to helping our residents repair

¹ H.R. 5325, *Continuing Appropriations and Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017* (P.L. 114-223); H.R. 2028, *Further Continuing and Security Assistance Appropriations Act* (P.L. 114-254); and H.R. 244, *Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017* (P.L. 115-31)

OFFICE MISSION

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their homes and communities. However, there are outstanding needs that remain. The storms and flooding devastated entire counties in my state. With the number of schools, homes, and businesses impacted, it was clear that action in Congress was necessary. That is why the most recent appropriations package passed by Congress included an additional \$400 million for HUD to address unfulfilled disaster recovery needs.

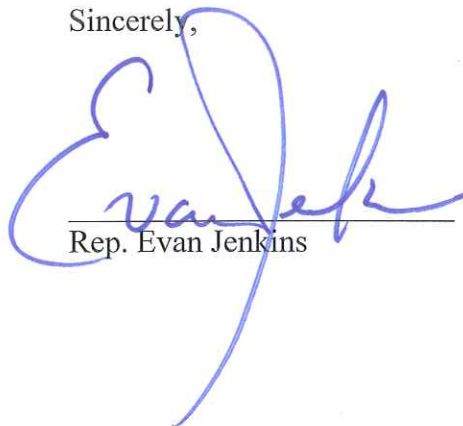
I want to reiterate that we are grateful for the support we have received from HUD and FEMA to this point. I would also like to highlight the concerns we have about the remaining shortfall between the West Virginia state government's determination of unmet need and the amount of unmet need allocated by HUD. While I recognize that there will always be differences in the determinations made by the state agencies and the federal agencies of jurisdiction, I believe that we ought to pursue the most comprehensive review possible.

It has recently come to my attention that HUD may be considering West Virginia CDBG-DR allocations using data provided by FEMA in early December 2016. If this is the case, I would request FEMA send an updated dataset to HUD in order to guarantee that HUD has the latest data at its disposal when determining such an allocation. It may be possible that more recent data could justify an increase in CDBG-DR funds for West Virginia's housing or public assistance needs resulting from the June 2016 floods.

It has been my top priority to ensure that West Virginia has the resources it needs to rebuild. I commend you on your leadership and look forward to continuing to work together on our recovery efforts.

Thank you for your consideration and assistance. I am truly appreciative of you, your organizations, and your outstanding staff.

Sincerely,



Rep. Evan Jenkins